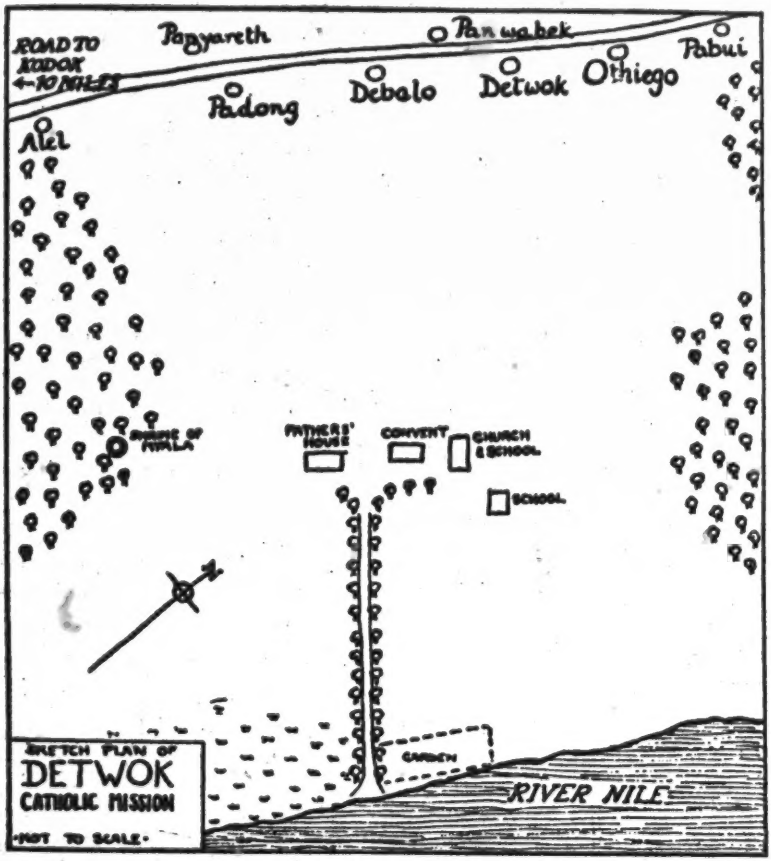
29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23



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last consolations of religion to these poor brethren of Christ. 797 763

After a month or so of my stay in Detwok I was happily settled in my new home, and was beginning to find my way about both in the district and—what was more difficult—in the Shilluk tongue. Although my activities were mainly confined to the classroom, occasionally I was able to escape from the trammels of schoolwork and spend a morning touring round some part of the mission. A morning of visiting 797 123

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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Chapter IV

SHILLUK LIFE

The Shilluk country is for the most part flat, low-lying grass-land. The river by constant pressure frequently breaks through its containing banks and, sweeping away the soft soil, inundates the land lying behind them. Since nothing is done to repair the broken banks, these inundations increase each year as with the rise of the Nile the waters creep ever further inland, receding only slowly with the fall of the flood waters. As a consequence of this, Shilluk villages are usually built well back from the river, at least half a mile from the highest point of the flood. Usually, too, they are built along the main road passing from Kaka to Tonga. In some areas, particularly in the Detwok-Kodok locality, villages can be found several miles inland, even up to as much as fourteen miles. In such places the people depend for their water supplies on the scum-covered water holes dug here and there. Naturally, under conditions like this personal hygiene is somewhat at a discount, and social or parochial calls present their own problems. During the dry season the Nile is the only source of water for most villages, even those situated miles away from the river. At Detwok, for instance, it is a common sight to see the women of Aguno trudging past the mission at six o'clock in the morning, having already walked five miles. In half an hour or so they will be on their way back balancing their full water-pots on their heads. They cannot reach their homes again before nine o'clock when they will have to set to work to grind millet and prepare the morning meal. If they are careful with the water it may last for two days, but then they will have to pick up the large earthenware pots and take the hated road to the Nile more than five miles off. Once when I happened to be passing through